

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 175

By Haynes

A RESOLUTION designating March 26, 2009, as “Braille Readers are Leaders Day” in the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, since its invention by Louis Braille, the reading and writing code for the blind that bears his name has become the accepted method of reading and writing for people without sight; and

WHEREAS, the Braille code is used to represent not only the alphabets of most written languages, but is also used for mathematical and scientific notation and the reproduction of musical scores; and

WHEREAS, contrary to widely held notions, Braille is not difficult to learn, nor is reading Braille slower than reading print; and

WHEREAS, while technology has improved the lives of those who are blind by facilitating quick access to information, no technology can replace Braille, which is a vital tool in literacy for the blind; and

WHEREAS, despite its efficiency, versatility, and universal acceptance by people who are blind, the rate of Braille literacy in the United States has declined to the point where only ten percent of children who are blind are learning the code; a literacy rate of ten percent among children with sight in the United States would cause national outrage; and

WHEREAS, the decline of Braille literacy is a national crisis and swift action must be taken to reverse this dangerous trend; and

WHEREAS, Braille is the key to independence, productivity, and success for people who are blind; eighty-five percent of people who are blind and employed use the Braille code effectively; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the blind, the nation's oldest and largest organization of blind people and the leading advocate for Braille literacy in the United States, has launched a national "Braille Readers are Leaders" campaign to promote awareness of the importance of Braille and to increase availability of competent Braille instruction and Braille reading materials in this country; and

WHEREAS, a key component of this campaign is the release of the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar by the United States Mint, which will be the first coin ever minted in the history of the United States to contain readable Braille characters. Proceeds from the sale of the commemorative silver dollar will benefit the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to increase Braille literacy; and

WHEREAS, it is important to applaud the committed efforts of all involved in the national "Braille Readers are Leaders" public awareness campaign; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this Body hereby designates March 26, 2009, as "Braille Readers are Leaders Day" in the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage all citizens of the State of Tennessee to participate in the observance of "Braille Readers are Leaders Day" by recognizing the importance of Braille to the lives of people who are blind and to assist the National Federation of the Blind in its efforts to increase instruction in the use of Braille in this state and across the nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.